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THE QUR'ANIC CONCEPT OF BEAUTY AS ENVIRONMENTAL PEDAGOGY: A *TAFSĪR MAWḌŪ'Ī* STUDY IN INDONESIAN PESANTREN

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Abstract: Research on student well-being in Islamic educational settings has primarily focused on psychological, spiritual, and instructional dimensions, while the pedagogical role of environmental aesthetics rooted in Qur'anic teachings remains underexplored. Existing studies have rarely examined how the Qur'anic concept of beauty can be translated into an educational framework that supports student well-being in contemporary Islamic boarding schools. This study aims to conceptualize Qur'anic beauty as a form of environmental pedagogy and examine its contribution to student well-being in Indonesian pesantren. This research employed a qualitative integrative design that combined thematic Qur'anic interpretation (*tafsīr mawḍū'ī*) based on *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* with contextual field research in three Islamic boarding schools. Data were collected through thematic analysis of Qur'anic verses, observations, semi-structured interviews with 22 key informants, and institutional document analysis. The findings reveal that Qur'anic beauty is articulated through concepts such as *jamāl*, *ḥusn*, *zīnah*, *sakīnah*, *mīzān*, *fiṭrah*, and *nūr*, which are synthesized into six dimensions: visual–aesthetic beauty, moral–social beauty, psychological calmness, harmony and balance, fitrah-based human-centered beauty, and spiritual–illuminative beauty. These dimensions are embedded in physical spaces, social interactions, institutional culture, and spiritual practices within pesantren. Beauty functions not merely as an aesthetic attribute but as a pedagogical mechanism that promotes emotional stability, social security, spiritual resilience, and meaningful learning engagement. This study contributes to Qur'anic and Islamic educational scholarship by developing an environmental pedagogical framework grounded in Qur'anic conceptions of beauty.

Keywords: Digital Well-Being; Environmental Pedagogy; Pondok Pesantren; Qur'anic Beauty; Student well-being.

Introduction

The development of Islamic education in the digital age cannot be understood solely through academic indicators, curriculum achievements, or levels of technology adoption (Barrett et al., 2019; Hascher et al., 2021). The latest focus in educational studies has shifted to the quality of the learning experience as a whole, encompassing physical, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions. In the context of Islamic boarding schools—as residential educational institutions that manage the lives of students 24 hours a day—the learning experience does not only take place in the classroom (Hoogerheide et al., 2019; Isbah, 2020; Lombardi et al., 2019; Nurtawab & Wahyudi, 2022). However, it is realized through the entire living environment: dormitories, mosques, courtyards, open spaces, worship rhythms, social relations, and

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even the way students interact with digital technology. Therefore, student comfort is a fundamental prerequisite for the sustainability of Islamic boarding school education in the digital age (Cleveland & Fisher, 2014; Jhang & Lee, 2018).

Several studies show that the quality of the learning environment and the climate of educational institutions significantly affect students' psychological well-being, learning engagement, and emotional resilience (Barrett et al., 2019; Madigan & Curran, 2021). A well-organized, clean, safe, and aesthetically pleasing environment has been shown to help reduce stress, increase focus, and strengthen a sense of belonging to the educational institution (Cheryan et al., 2014; Silver & Grek-Martin, 2015). From an educational psychology perspective, a favorable school climate also correlates with learning engagement through the mediation of well-being, so that comfort cannot be separated from the quality of the educational process itself (Chen et al., 2017; Salmela-Aro & Upadyaya, 2014). However, most of these studies were developed in the context of modern schools and universities, with an emphasis on technical and psychosocial aspects, and have not fully integrated religious and spiritual dimensions as a foundation of meaning (King & Boyatzis, 2015; Mulyatin et al., 2026).

At the same time, today's santri live in increasingly complex situations due to the penetration of digital technology (Leonhardt et al., 2025; Sala et al., 2024). The presence of gadgets, social media, and the constant flow of information creates new challenges in including digital fatigue, visual overstimulation, and performative pressure, which affect students' concentration, emotional stability, and mental health (Dumas et al., 2023; Ryan & Deci, 2020; Schmitt et al., 2021). In many cases, institutional responses to this issue are still limited to regulating the use of digital devices, such as restricting time or prohibiting certain access (Campbell et al., 2024; Goodyear et al., 2025). A regulatory approach alone, while important, often fails to address the deeper root of the problem: how the educational environment as a whole can serve as a space that calms, balances, and humanizes students amid digital pressures (Basid & Maghfiroh, 2025; Sala et al., 2024).

In the discourse on contemporary Islamic boarding schools, studies on digital transformation have shown that these schools possess strong adaptive capacities through the leadership of religious teachers, institutional governance, and the integration of technology in educational services (Azra, 2018; Mujahid, 2021; Taufikin et al., 2025). Pesantren have even been able to maintain educational continuity during crises, such as pandemics, through various forms of digital innovation (Ansori et al., 2022; Sholahuddin Al Ayubi, 2023). However, these studies frame digitalization as a systemic and managerial issue. At the same time, the aesthetic aspects of the pesantren environment—as a factor in students' comfort and psychological well-being—have not been discussed in depth or systematically.

This is where the Qur'an offers a relevant and rich conceptual horizon. The Qur'an not only talks about law and faith, but also presents vocabulary and a framework of values about beauty in its various dimensions, such as *ḥusn* (beautiful goodness), *jamāl* (glorifying beauty), *zīnah* (adornment), *bahjah* (joyful beauty), *ṭayyib* (soothing goodness), and the principles of balance and harmony in creation (Al-Mahalli & Al-Suyuti, 2020). From a Qur'anic perspective, beauty is not mere ornamentation but a sign of Allah's

mercy that calms the soul, maintains balance, and guides humans towards a good and meaningful life.

However, studies of beauty in the Qur'an have largely developed within theological, ethical, and aesthetic discourses rather than within the field of applied Qur'anic pedagogy. Existing scholarship has examined Qur'anic beauty as a manifestation of divine aesthetics, moral excellence, and spiritual refinement (Bauer, 2017; Christensen Hughes, 2022; Naguib, 2019). More recent thematic studies have explored concepts such as *jamāl*, *iḥsān*, *ẓīnah*, and *sakīnah* as ethical and spiritual categories, yet these discussions remain predominantly normative and textual, with limited attention to their pedagogical implications or institutional applications (Makaremi et al., 2024; Mohidem et al., 2023). As a result, the interpretive potential of Qur'anic beauty has rarely been extended beyond doctrinal exposition toward the construction of an operational framework for educational environments.

Within Qur'anic studies, classical exegesis—including *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*—is generally employed to explain lexical meanings, theological messages, and contextual interpretations of verses (Blatherwick, 2020; Mustaqim, 2017). However, relatively few studies have utilized thematic exegesis as a bridge between Qur'anic concepts and the institutional realities of contemporary Islamic education, particularly pesantren (Nurtawab & Wahyudi, 2022; Wijaya & Muzammil, 2021). Consequently, a significant gap remains in understanding how Qur'anic notions of beauty, tranquility, balance, and human flourishing can be systematically translated into pedagogical principles.

The gap becomes more evident when studies on well-being, school climate, and learning environments are considered alongside Qur'anic scholarship. Educational research consistently highlights the importance of aesthetically supportive environments for student well-being and engagement (Lombardi et al., 2019), while Qur'anic studies provide rich conceptual resources concerning beauty, harmony, and serenity (Makaremi et al., 2024; Mohidem et al., 2023). Nevertheless, these two bodies of literature have rarely been integrated. Therefore, this study contributes to the discourse of thematic exegesis by reconstructing the Qur'anic concept of beauty through *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* and contextualizing it as an environmental pedagogical framework for contemporary pesantren in the digital age.

Based on this background, this article aims to formulate the concept of "Beauty" as Qur'anic pedagogy through a thematic interpretation (*tafsīr mawḍū'ī*) approach based on Tafsīr Jalalayn, and contextualize it in the management of the pesantren environment to improve the comfort of santri in the digital era (Bondarev, 2013; Safala, 2025). This study focuses on three Islamic boarding schools, namely Ar-Rohmah Putra Malang Islamic Boarding School, Ar-Rohmah Putri Malang International Boarding School (IBS), and Al-Irsyad Tengaran Islamic Boarding School, which represent modern Islamic boarding school models with different characteristics in terms of environment, disciplinary culture, and educational orientation.

Based on this background, this article seeks to examine how the concept of beauty in the Qur'an can be constructed through a thematic exegesis (*tafsīr mawḍū'ī*) based on *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* and interpreted as a pedagogical framework for the pesantren

environment in supporting students' well-being in the digital age. Rather than treating beauty merely as an aesthetic category, this study explores its multidimensional meanings and pedagogical significance within the Qur'anic worldview. Accordingly, this article is guided by the following central research question: How can the concept of beauty in the Qur'an, based on a thematic exegesis of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, be constructed as a pedagogical framework for the pesantren environment to enhance students' well-being in the digital age?

To address this question, the study identifies and interprets Qur'anic concepts associated with beauty, examines their thematic relationships, and analyzes their relevance to the educational environment of contemporary pesantren. Through this approach, the article aims to contribute to the development of thematic Qur'anic exegesis while demonstrating its applicability to contemporary Islamic educational contexts.

This article offers three main contributions. First, a conceptual contribution in the form of developing "Beauty" as a multidimensional Qur'anic pedagogical category that encompasses visual, moral, psychological, harmony, human nature, and spiritual beauty. Second, an interpretive contribution by showing that *Tafsīr Jalālayn* can serve as a bridge between the text of the Qur'an and contemporary educational practices through an applicable thematic approach. Third, a pedagogical-institutional contribution that emphasizes that the beauty of the pesantren environment is not merely an aesthetic aspect of the facilities, but rather an Islamic educational strategy oriented towards the comfort of the santri, psychological well-being, and the sustainability of learning in the digital age.

Thus, this article positions beauty as a serious and relevant category of education and broadens the perspective on modern Islamic boarding schools, not only as institutions that are adaptive to technology, but also as Qur'anic living spaces designed to provide tranquility, balance, and a beautiful, meaningful learning experience for students.

This study adopts an interpretive–constructivist paradigm, which assumes that meaning emerges through the interaction between text, interpretation, and social reality (Cohen et al., 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2022). Methodologically, it employs an interpretive qualitative approach using an integrative–contextual design that combines thematic Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsīr mawḍū'ī*) with qualitative field research in contemporary Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*). This design was selected to ensure that the interpretation of Qur'anic concepts remains connected to their practical manifestations within Islamic educational environments, particularly in relation to environmental beauty and students' well-being in the digital era.

The study was conducted at three Islamic educational institutions: Pesantren Ar-Rohmah Putra Malang, International Boarding School (IBS) Ar-Rohmah Putri Malang, and Pesantren Islam Al-Irsyad Tengaran. These institutions were purposively selected because they represent contemporary pesantren that integrate residential education, environmental management, religious discipline, and adaptation to digital-era educational challenges.

The primary textual data consisted of Qur'anic verses related to beauty and their interpretations in *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*. To strengthen exegetical validity, several classical and contemporary commentaries were also consulted comparatively, including *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, and *Tafsir Al-Misbah*, particularly when interpreting key concepts such as *jamāl*, *zīnah*, *ḥusn*, *iḥsān*, *sakīnah*, *mīzān*, *fiṭrah*, and *nūr*. While *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* served as the primary reference due to its concise lexical focus and pedagogically relevant explanations, comparative readings were employed to ensure interpretive consistency and conceptual robustness.

Field data were obtained from 22 purposively selected informants consisting of pesantren leaders, teachers (*ustādh/ustādḥah*), dormitory supervisors (*mushrīf/mushrifah*), and students across the three institutions. Informants were selected based on three criteria: (1) active involvement in educational and boarding activities, (2) familiarity with institutional culture and environmental management practices, and (3) willingness to participate voluntarily in the study. Additional data were derived from institutional documents, including student regulations, environmental policies, daily schedules, and digital-device guidelines.

Data collection was conducted through three complementary techniques. First, non-participant observation was undertaken to document physical environments, daily educational routines, social interactions, and spiritual activities within the pesantren. Observations were conducted over a four-month period and recorded through detailed field notes. Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with all 22 informants. Interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and subsequently transcribed verbatim to preserve interpretive accuracy. The interview protocol focused on participants' perceptions of environmental beauty, institutional culture, student comfort, and the role of educational spaces in supporting well-being. Third, document analysis was carried out to identify how values related to beauty, order, balance, and environmental management were formally institutionalized within each pesantren.

To ensure trustworthiness, the study employed source triangulation, method triangulation, and data triangulation (Denzin, 2017; Flick, 2022). Findings from observations, interviews, and documents were systematically compared, while member checking was conducted with selected participants to verify the accuracy of interpretations. Ethical principles were maintained through informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, anonymity of respondents, and participants' right to withdraw from the study at any stage.

The first stage involved thematic Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsīr mawḍū'ī*). All Qur'anic verses containing vocabulary and expressions related to beauty were identified through close reading, thematic indexing, and lexical searches. Key terms included *jamāl*, *ḥusn*, *zīnah*, *bahjah*, *sakīnah*, *mīzān*, *aḥsan*, *fiṭrah*, and *nūr*. These verses were interpreted primarily through *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* and subsequently compared with other exegetical sources. The resulting interpretations were subjected to thematic coding and semantic comparison to identify recurring patterns of meaning. Through this process, six thematic clusters of Qur'anic beauty were constructed: (1) visual–aesthetic beauty, (2) moral–social beauty, (3)

psychological beauty and tranquility, (4) harmony and balance, (5) fitrah-based humanistic beauty, and (6) spiritual–illuminative beauty.

The second stage involved contextual analysis of field data. Using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Squires, 2023; Thompson, 2022), observational, interview, and documentary data were coded and interpreted according to the six Qur'anic beauty clusters. Pattern matching was then employed to examine the relationship between Qur'anic concepts and environmental practices within the three pesantren, thereby enabling the construction of a contextual pedagogical framework grounded in both exegetical and empirical evidence.

The Construction of the Concept of Thematic Interpretation of "Beauty" in the Qur'an Based on the *Jalālayn* Interpretation

The verses of the Qur'an shows that the concept of beauty in the Qur'anic perspective is multidimensional and functional, not limited to visual aesthetics alone. Through a *tafsīr mawḍū'ī* approach with primary reference to *Tafsīr Jalālayn*, this study finds that the Qur'an uses a variety of vocabulary and expressions to describe beauty as a condition that calms the soul, balances life, and guides humans towards a meaningful life (Husna et al., 2026).

Lexically, the Qur'an employs a diverse vocabulary to express what may broadly be understood as "beauty," including *jamāl*, *zīnah*, *ḥusn*, *iḥsān*, *sakīnah*, *mīzān*, *fiṭrah*, and *nūr*. However, these terms do not belong to a single semantic field and should not be treated as synonymous. A thematic reading of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* indicates that each term conveys a distinct dimension of meaning within the Qur'anic worldview (Al-Maḥallī & Al-Suyūṭī, 2024).

For instance, jamāl in Q.S. al-Naḥl (16): 6 refers primarily to visible beauty that evokes delight and appreciation, particularly in relation to Allah's blessings in creation (Al-Mahalli & Al-Suyuti, 2020). In contrast, zīnah in Q.S. al-A'rāf (7): 31 denotes adornment or embellishment that is permissible when used appropriately, yet elsewhere the Qur'an also presents *zīnah* as a potential source of worldly attraction, temptation, and moral testing. Thus, *zīnah* carries an ambivalent semantic character that differs from jamāl (Al-Mahalli & Al-Suyuti, 2020).

Similarly, ḥusn generally refers to goodness expressed through commendable conduct and speech, whereas *iḥsān* signifies a higher ethical quality involving excellence and the performance of good beyond minimum obligation (Al-Mahalli & Al-Suyuti, 2020). The term *sakīnah* emphasizes divinely bestowed tranquility and psychological stability, while *mīzān* refers to balance, proportion, and cosmic order as fundamental principles of creation. Likewise, fiṭrah highlights the primordial nature upon which human beings are created, whereas nūr represents spiritual illumination and divine guidance that orient human life toward truth and meaning (Al-Mahalli & Al-Suyuti, 2020).

These semantic distinctions demonstrate that Qur'anic beauty is not a singular aesthetic category but a multidimensional construct encompassing visual, ethical, psychological, cosmological, anthropological, and spiritual dimensions (see table 1). Such

differentiation provides the interpretive basis for the thematic clustering developed in this study and prevents the reduction of diverse Qur'anic concepts into a single undifferentiated notion of beauty.

Table 1. Semantic Differentiation of Beauty-Related Terms in the Qur'an

Term	Core Meaning	Semantic Domain	Distinctive Feature
Jamāl	Visible beauty	Aesthetic	Evokes delight and appreciation
Zīnah	Adornment	Aesthetic-Moral	Can be positive or a source of temptation
Ḥusn	Goodness	Ethical	Beautiful conduct and speech
Iḥsān	Excellence	Ethical-Spiritual	Going beyond obligation
Sakīnah	Tranquility	Psychological	Inner calm granted by God
Mīzān	Balance	Cosmological	Harmony and proportionality
Fiṭrah	Primordial nature	Anthropological	Human nature and authenticity
Nūr	Divine light	Spiritual	Guidance and illumination

An important finding from Jalalayn's reading is that the Qur'an consistently associates beauty with ethical and psychological functions. Moral beauty is reflected in the terms *ḥusn* and *iḥsān*, which in *Jalālayn's* interpretation are understood as good behavior that goes beyond mere formal obligations. Beauty in this form is not visually apparent, but is present in social relations, speech, and a gentle attitude towards life. Thus, Qur'anic beauty is not only "seen" but also "experienced" in human interactions (Al-Mahalli & Al-Suyuti, 2020; Toshihiko Izutsu, 2002).

In addition, the Qur'an also associates beauty with inner peace and psychological stability. The term *sakīnah* (QS. Al-Fath (48): 4) In the Jalalayn interpretation, it is explained as tranquility that Allah descends into the hearts of believers so that they remain calm and steadfast in the face of difficult situations. Similarly, *naḍrah* (QS. Al-Muṭaffifīn (83): 24) is interpreted as an outpouring of inner happiness visible on the face, not merely a physical expression but a reflection of internal peace. This finding confirms that the beauty in the Qur'an has a regulatory function in human emotional states (Bauer, 2017; Al-Mahalli & Al-Suyuti, 2020).

Another prominent dimension is beauty as cosmic harmony and balance. *Jalālayn's* interpretation of the concept *of mīzān* (QS. Al-Raḥmān (55): 7-8) emphasizes that balance is a fundamental principle of Allah's creation that must not be violated. Beauty, in this context, is not synonymous with luxury, but rather with order, proportion, and harmony (Al-Mahalli & Al-Suyuti, 2020; Toshihiko Izutsu, 1964, 2002). This

principle is reinforced by the term *mutashābih* (QS. Al-Zumar (39): 23), which describes the harmony of the Qur'an's verses as a source of meaningful and structural beauty.

Furthermore, the analysis shows that Qur'anic beauty is also natural and humanistic. The term *aḥsan* in QS. Al-Tīn (95): 4 and QS. Ghāfir (40): 64, according to Jalalayn, affirms that humans are created in the best form and with the most significant potential. Beauty, thus, must be in harmony with human nature and support the growth of human potential, not suppress it. The concept of *fiṭrah* (QS. Al-Rūm (30): 30) reinforces this view by placing beauty as something natural and not artificial (Rahmawati & Husna, 2026).

Finally, beauty in the Qur'an reaches its peak in the spiritual and illuminative dimensions. *Jalālayn's* interpretation of the concept *of nūr* (QS. Al-Nūr (24): 35) emphasizes that true beauty comes from the light of divine guidance that illuminates the heart and gives direction to life. Within this framework, beauty is not merely an external condition, but an inner quality that guides humans toward goodness and balance in life (Al-Mahalli & Al-Suyuti, 2020; Neuwirth, 2014).

Based on these findings, result 1 confirms that "Beauty" in the Qur'an is a holistic conceptual construct, encompassing visual, moral, psychological, harmonious, natural, and spiritual dimensions. The *Jalālayn* interpretation plays a key role in revealing that Qur'anic beauty is always oriented towards pedagogical and humanistic functions, thereby providing a strong normative foundation for contextualization in Islamic educational environments, especially Islamic boarding schools in the digital era. This can be seen briefly in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Conceptual Construction of Beauty in the Qur'an Based on Maudhū'ī Exegesis

No	Qur'anic Term	Representative Verse	Meaning of Beauty (Qur'anic Text)	Explanation in the Jalalayn Exegesis	Conceptual Implications
1	*Jamāl*	QS. Al-Naḥl (16): 6	Pleasant beauty	Beauty is a blessing that soothes the soul	Beauty provides psychological comfort
2	*Zīnah*	QS. Al-A'rāf (7): 31	Ornaments and aesthetics	Beauty is permissible as long as it does not exceed limits	Beauty is proportional
3	*Ḥusn*	QS. Al-Baqarah (2): 83	Beautiful kindness	Gentleness in attitude and speech	Moral and relational beauty
4	*Iḥsān*	QS. An-Naḥl (16): 90	High level of goodness	Doing good beyond obligation	Beauty as a quality of character
5	*Bahjah*	QS. Al-Naml	Beauty that	The beauty of nature as a sign of	Ecological beauty is

		(27): 60	brings joy	grace	soothing
6	*Sakīnah*	QS. Al-Fatḥ (48): 4	Inner peace	Stable peace from Allah	Beauty as an emotional regulator
7	*Naḍrah*	QS. Al-Muṭaffifīn (83): 24	A radiant face	The radiance of inner happiness	Beauty as a reflection of the soul
8	*Mīzān*	QS. Al-Raḥmān (55): 7-8	Balance	The orderliness of creation that is preserved	Beauty is the harmony of the system
9	*Aḥsan*	QS. Al-Tīn (95): 4	The best form	The perfection of human creation	Beauty in harmony with nature
10	*Nūr*	QS. Al-Nūr (24): 35	The light of guidance	Spiritual-illuminative beauty	Beauty that gives direction to life

Summary Table 2: *Mauḍū'i's* interpretation in *Tafsīr Jalālayn* shows that Qur'anic beauty is holistic, encompassing visual, moral, psychological, structural, natural, and spiritual dimensions (Al-Mahalli & Al-Suyuti, 2020).

Analytical Basis for the Reduction of Qur'anic Beauty Concepts

The reduction of twenty Qur'anic terms and expressions into six thematic clusters was not conducted solely on the basis of lexical similarity. Rather, it emerged through an iterative process of thematic coding that combined four analytical criteria: (1) semantic proximity among key Qur'anic terms, (2) contextual meaning within the relevant verses, (3) exegetical interpretation derived primarily from *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, and (4) pedagogical relevance to educational environments. Following the principles of *tafsīr mawḍū'ī*, each term was first interpreted individually, then compared across verses to identify recurring patterns of meaning. Terms that shared similar semantic orientations and educational functions were subsequently grouped into broader thematic categories. Therefore, the six clusters presented in this study should be understood as the result of a systematic process of thematic–exegetical reduction rather than a priori conceptual classification (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Al-Mahalli & Al-Suyuti, 2020; Nowell et al., 2017; Thompson, 2022).

Table 3. Thematic–Exegetical Basis for the Reduction of Qur'anic Beauty Concepts

Qur'anic Term	**Representative Verse**	**Meaning in *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn***	**Semantic Category**	**Reason for Inclusion in Cluster**
Jamāl	Q.S. Al-Naḥl (16): 6	Beauty that brings delight	Aesthetic	Refers to visible beauty that creates

		and appreciation of Allah's blessings		sensory comfort
Zīnah	Q.S. Al-A'rāf (7): 31	Adornment permitted within proper limits	Aesthetic–Moral	Relates to environmental appearance while requiring moderation
Bahjah	Q.S. Al-Naml (27): 60	Delightful beauty in nature as a sign of divine grace	Aesthetic	Represents visual attractiveness that evokes gratitude
Zahrah	Q.S. Ṭāhā (20): 131	Worldly splendor and attractiveness	Aesthetic–Evaluative	Connected with visual beauty but accompanied by ethical caution
Zar'in Bahīj	Q.S. Qāf (50): 7	Pleasant and flourishing vegetation	Ecological–Aesthetic	Symbolizes environmental beauty in creation
Ḥusn	Q.S. Al-Baqarah (2): 83	Goodness in speech and conduct	Ethical	Represents relational and moral beauty
Iḥsān	Q.S. An-Naḥl (16): 90	Excellence beyond obligation	Ethical–Spiritual	Indicates the highest form of moral beauty
Ḥasanah	Q.S. Al-Baqarah (2): 201	Goodness and benefit	Ethical	Reflects virtuous action and social well-being
Qawlan Ḥasanan	Q.S. Al-Baqarah (2): 83	Kind and respectful speech	Ethical–Relational	Supports harmonious social interaction
Sakīnah	Q.S. Al-Fatḥ (48): 4	Divine tranquility in the heart	Psychological	Represents inner peace and emotional stability
Naḍrah	Q.S. Al-Muṭaffifīn (83): 24	Radiance resulting from inner happiness	Psychological	Reflects emotional well-being manifested externally
Bahiyy	Q.S. Maryam (19): 8	Pleasant and joyful condition	Psychological	Associated with positive emotional states

Mīzān	Q.S. Ar-Raḥmān (55): 7-8	Balance established in creation	Cosmological	Represents harmony, order, and proportionality
Mutashābih	Q.S. Al-Zumar (39): 23	Coherent and harmonious structure	Structural	Indicates internal consistency and balance
Aḥsān	Q.S. Al-Tīn (95): 4	The best form of human creation	Anthropological	Affirms human dignity and potential
Fiṭrah	Q.S. Al-Rūm (30): 30	Original human nature created by Allah	Anthropological	Supports human-centered educational principles
Nūr	Q.S. Al-Nūr (24): 35	Divine light and guidance	Spiritual	Represents illuminative and transcendent beauty
Ṭayyib	Q.S. Al-Baqarah (2): 168	Pure, wholesome, and beneficial goodness	Spiritual–Ethical	Indicates purity that nurtures spiritual well-being

As shown in Table 3, the reduction of twenty Qur'anic terms into six clusters emerged from a combination of semantic proximity, exegetical interpretation, verse context, and pedagogical relevance. Terms sharing similar thematic orientations were grouped into broader categories that preserved their conceptual coherence while enabling their application to educational environments (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Al-Mahalli & Al-Suyuti, 2020). Through this process, six interrelated clusters of Qur'anic beauty were identified (Faramāwī, 1977; Mustaqim, 2017): visual–aesthetic beauty, moral–social beauty, psychological tranquility, harmony and balance, fitrah-based humanistic beauty, and spiritual–illuminative beauty.

Implementation of the Six "Beauty" Clusters in the Pesantren Environment

The implementation of the six Qur'anic "Beauty" clusters in the pesantren environment was analyzed through the integration of environmental observations, institutional document analysis, and semi-structured interviews with 22 informants, consisting of pesantren caregivers/leaders, *ustādh-ustādhah*, dormitory supervisors, and santri. Data were obtained from three institutions: the Ar-Rohmah Putra Islamic Boarding School in Malang, the Ar-Rohmah Putri International Boarding School (IBS) in Malang, and the Al-Irsyad Tengaran Islamic Boarding School.

The analysis focuses on how the six "Beauty" clusters operate in practice as pedagogical infrastructure rather than merely as normative values in shaping santri comfort in the digital age.

Table 4. Implementation of the Six "Beauty" Clusters in the Pesantren Environment

No	Beauty Cluster	Environmental Implementation Theme	Evidence Across Pesantren	Frequency (n=22)	Interpretation
1	Visual Beauty & Aesthetics	Cleanliness, spatial order, lighting, green environment	Found consistently across all three pesantren, although environmental design was more elaborate in IBS Ar-Rohmah Putri than in Al-Irsyad Tengaran	19	Visual beauty functions as a sensory regulator that reduces environmental stress and digital overstimulation.
2	Moral & Social Beauty	Manners, communication ethics, respectful interaction	Particularly emphasized in IBS Ar-Rohmah Putri through both face-to-face and digital etiquette policies	18	Moral beauty creates social trust and emotional security.
3	Psychological Beauty (*Sakīnah*)	Structured routines, calm atmosphere, balanced schedules	Strongly evident in Al-Irsyad Tengaran, where students frequently associated routine with emotional stability	17	*Sakīnah* emerges through institutional rhythm rather than solely individual spirituality.
4	Harmony &	Balance between	Most explicitly	16	Structural

	Balance (*Mīzān*)	religious, academic, and character education	articulated by institutional leaders in IBS Ar-Rohmah Putri and Ar-Rohmah Putra		balance provides predictability and reduces educational stress.
5	Fitrah & Humanistic Beauty	Student agency, expression, and personal development	More visible in Ar-Rohmah Putra, where students were provided greater opportunities for movement and self-expression	14	Human-centered beauty prevents dehumanization and excessive disciplinary rigidity.
6	Spiritual & Illuminative Beauty	Worship-centered environment, mosque-based learning culture	Consistently present in all pesantren, although expressed through different ritual emphases	21	Spiritual beauty serves as an existential anchor that strengthens resilience amid digital pressures.

Findings from Table 4 indicate that the six Qur'anic Beauty clusters were present across the three pesantren, although their modes of implementation varied. Visual beauty and environmental aesthetics emerged as the most observable dimension, particularly through cleanliness, spatial order, and green environments. While all institutions emphasized environmental maintenance, IBS Ar-Rohmah Putri demonstrated a more systematic integration of aesthetic design into educational spaces, whereas Al-Irsyad Tengaran placed greater emphasis on functional simplicity. This finding suggests that visual beauty is not expressed through a uniform architectural model but through diverse institutional interpretations of environmental comfort (Interview Data: Caregiver-ARP, Caregiver-IBS, Student-AIT).

Moral and social beauty was consistently reflected in etiquette, respectful interaction, and communication ethics. However, IBS Ar-Rohmah Putri extended this principle into digital communication (Interview: Teacher-IBS; Institutional Digital Etiquette Guideline), indicating an adaptive interpretation of Qur'anic moral values within contemporary technological contexts. Similarly, psychological beauty (*sakīnah*) was closely associated with structured daily routines, particularly at Al-Irsyad Tengaran, where students repeatedly linked emotional stability to institutional rhythm and predictability (Interview: Student-AIT-03; Student-AIT-05).

The findings also reveal that the principle of *mīẓān* (balance) was not implemented identically across institutions. While leaders generally emphasized equilibrium between religious and academic learning, some students reported occasional tensions between disciplinary expectations and personal comfort (Interview: Student-ARP-04; Student-IBS-02). This suggests that balance remains an ongoing pedagogical negotiation rather than a fully achieved condition.

A similar pattern emerged within the cluster of *fiṭrah*-based humanistic beauty. Although all pesantren acknowledged the importance of student development, differences existed regarding the extent of freedom granted for self-expression. Several informants viewed discipline as essential for character formation, whereas others emphasized the need for greater personal autonomy. These perspectives illustrate the dynamic relationship between institutional control and human-centered educational ideals (Interview: Musyrif-ARP; Student-ARP-06).

Among the six clusters, spiritual and illuminative beauty displayed the highest degree of consistency. Informants across all three pesantren described worship practices, mosque-centered activities, and spiritual routines as key sources of emotional regulation and self-control in the digital era (Interview: Senior Student-AIT; Teacher-IBS; Caregiver-ARP). Nevertheless, the form and intensity of these practices varied according to institutional culture.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Qur'anic Beauty operates not as a fixed institutional model but as a multidimensional pedagogical framework manifested through diverse educational practices. The consistency of themes across observations, interviews, and institutional documents supports the argument that Qur'anic beauty functions as a living pedagogical mechanism operating simultaneously at sensory, social, emotional, structural, humanistic, and spiritual levels. At the same time, variations and tensions among the three pesantren indicate that the implementation of Qur'anic Environmental Pedagogy remains context-dependent and continuously negotiated within specific institutional settings.

The Contribution of the Beauty of the Pesantren Environment to Student well being in the Digital Age

The findings indicate that the six Qur'anic Beauty clusters contribute to student comfort through interconnected sensory, social, emotional, structural, humanistic, and spiritual mechanisms. Rather than functioning as isolated environmental features, these dimensions operate cumulatively to create a learning ecology that supports student well-being amid increasing digital pressures.

At the sensory level, visual beauty expressed through cleanliness, spatial order, lighting, and green environments helps reduce overstimulation and restore attentional balance. This finding is consistent with studies highlighting the relationship between environmental aesthetics and student well-being (Barrett et al., 2019; Lombardi et al., 2019). Similar perceptions were expressed by participants across the three pesantren, who associated orderly environments with greater concentration and emotional calmness (Interview, Caregiver-ARP; Interview, Student-AIT).

At the social level, the clusters of *ḥusn* and *iḥsān* contribute to the formation of a relational climate characterized by mutual respect, ethical communication, and social trust. Participants emphasized that etiquette was not limited to face-to-face interactions but extended to digital communication practices, thereby reducing social tension within increasingly mediated educational environments (Interview, Teacher-IBS).

The findings further reveal that *sakīnah* and *mīẓān* function as institutional principles rather than merely individual virtues. Emotional stability emerged through structured daily routines, while balance between academic, religious, and personal development activities generated predictability and reduced educational stress (Interview, Student-AIT; Interview, Leader-IBS). In this respect, student comfort was closely related to the organization of institutional life rather than to technological regulation alone.

Finally, the clusters of *fiṭrah* and *nūr* demonstrate that comfort in pesantren extends beyond psychological well-being toward existential and spiritual dimensions. Informants consistently associated worship practices, meaningful relationships, and spiritually oriented environments with resilience in navigating the fragmented and accelerated nature of digital life (Interview, Senior Student-AIT).

Taken together, these findings suggest that Qur'anic beauty functions not merely as an aesthetic attribute but as a multidimensional pedagogical resource that shapes how students experience learning, community, and spirituality within contemporary pesantren settings.

In summary, the contribution of the beauty of the pesantren environment to the comfort of santri in the digital era is integrative and cumulative. The six "Beauty" clusters work simultaneously to create a stable, safe, and meaningful learning experience. Beauty, in this context, is not merely an aesthetic complement but an effective Qur'anic pedagogical strategy to maintain students' well-being, mitigate the negative impacts of digitalization, and ensure the sustainability of pesantren education in the digital age. This is clearly illustrated in Table 5 below.

Table 5. "Beauty" Synthesis – Pesantren Environment – Student well being in the Digital Age

No	Qur'anic "Beauty" Cluster	Core Qur'anic Principle	Implementation of the Pesantren Environment	Forms of Student Comfort	Impact in the Digital Age
1	Visual Beauty & Aesthetics	*Jamāl, Zīnah*	Neat and clean layout, adequate lighting, green spaces, proportional aesthetics	Sensory comfort, increased focus	Reduces screen overstimulation and visual fatigue
2	Moral & Social Beauty	*Ḥusn, Iḥsān*	Cultural etiquette, polite speech, communication ethics (offline-online)	Socially safe, accepted	Reducing conflict and digital social pressure
3	Psychological	*Sakīnah,*	Balanced rhythm of	Emotional	Reduce digital

	beauty	*Naḍrah*	life (worship-study-rest), quiet space	stability, inner peace	fatigue and anxiety
4	The Beauty of Harmony & Balance	*Mīzān, Mutashābih*	Curriculum balance (academic–religious–character), structured system	Structural security, certainty	Reducing digital performance anxiety
5	The Beauty of Fitrah & Humanity	*Aḥsan, Fiṭrah*	Human-centered environment, physical activity space, and close teacher-student relationships	Valued as subjects, existential comfort	Preventing digital alienation and dehumanizatio n
6	Spiritual & Illuminative Beauty	*Nūr, Ṭayyib*	The mosque as a center, cleanliness of worship spaces, internalization of the value of tawhid	Spiritual tranquility, meaningfu lness	Meaningful resilience amid the digital tide

Table 5 shows in synthesis how the six "Beauty" Qur'ani clusters operate as a unified whole that connects revelatory values, pesantren environmental management, and santri comfort in the digital age.

Visual Beauty and Aesthetics

In environmental psychology, the visual quality of learning spaces is recognized as an important factor influencing emotional regulation, cognitive focus, and recovery from mental fatigue (Berto, 2014; Turgut et al., 2025). The theory of restorative environments asserts that visual order, natural lighting, and the presence of open and green spaces can reduce overstimulation and increase sensory calm, especially in the context of intensive, digital-based learning (Kaplan, 1995). Recent educational studies also show that school environment design significantly contributes to students' well-being and learning engagement by shaping the quality of the spatial experience (Barrett et al., 2019).

The findings of this study show that the three Islamic boarding schools consciously manage cleanliness, spatial order, and aesthetic simplicity as part of institutional discipline. Interviews with caregivers and students indicate that a neat and bright environment helps maintain focus and reduces mental fatigue after digital-based learning activities. Visual beauty in Islamic boarding schools is not interpreted as luxury or a symbol of prestige, but rather as a basic condition for student well-being.

The contribution of this research lies in expanding the understanding of Islamic educational aesthetics by emphasizing that the Qur'anic concepts *of jamāl* and *zīnah* function as pedagogical sensory regulators. The visual beauty of Islamic boarding schools can thus be understood as an effective non-technological educational strategy to mitigate the effects of digital overstimulation.

Moral and Social Beauty

School climate and social-emotional learning theories place the quality of social relationships and interaction norms as the main determinants of student welfare and engagement (Eriksen et al., 2025; Hansen et al., 2025). Within the framework of Self-Determination Theory, safe and respectful relationships fulfill the basic need for relatedness, which contributes to students' comfort and intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Research shows that Islamic boarding schools instill moral values through a culture of manners, polite speech, and communication ethics that apply to both direct and digital interactions. Interviews with teachers show that ethics in the use of electronic devices is positioned as an integral part of moral education, not just a technical rule. This practice creates a safe, supportive social climate that helps students feel accepted and emotionally protected.

The contribution of this research is the interpretation of the Qur'anic concepts of *ḥusn* and *iḥsān* as the ethical foundation of the social climate of Islamic boarding schools. Moral beauty not only shapes individual character but also serves as a psychosocial buffer, reducing conflict and emotional pressure in the digital ecosystem.

Psychological Beauty (Sakīnah)

The literature on student well-being emphasizes the importance of routine, predictability, and a balanced schedule in maintaining students' emotional stability (Hascher et al., 2021). In the context of digital learning, irregularities in the rhythm of life and learning are often associated with increased mental fatigue and anxiety (digital fatigue) (Berger, 2014; Turgut et al., 2025).

Research findings show that the rhythm of life in Islamic boarding schools—which balances learning, worship, rest, and social activities—is perceived by students as a source of inner peace (*sakīnah*). Regular schedules and a consistent living environment provide a sense of stability and security, even though students face academic demands and exposure to digital technology.

The main contribution of this study is to expand the meaning of *sakīnah* from an individual spiritual experience to an institutional design product. Psychological beauty is understood as the result of the architecture of time and the atmosphere of pesantren life, which serve as mechanisms for collective emotional regulation in the digital age.

The Beauty of Harmony and Balance

Educational organization theory asserts that system coherence and balance of demands are prerequisites for a healthy and sustainable learning climate (Admiraal et al., 2021; Bakker & de Vries, 2021). An imbalance between academic demands, character building, and students' personal needs often triggers performative anxiety and learning fatigue.

This study found that Islamic boarding schools consciously maintain a balance between academic, *diniyah* (Islamic) education, and character building. Interviews with boarding school leaders showed that system harmony is seen as a preventive strategy to maintain students' comfort. This principle of balance is reflected in the curriculum structure, daily schedule, and relatively proportional distribution of activities.

The contribution of this research lies in interpreting the Qur'anic concept of *mīzān* as the basis for structural beauty in the management of Islamic boarding schools. Beauty is not only present at the visual or moral level, but also in the regularity of the system that provides certainty and a sense of psychological security for students.

The Beauty of Nature and Humanity

The human-centered education approach emphasizes that the learning environment must be in harmony with the developmental needs of students as whole human beings, not merely objects of discipline and evaluation (Becker, 1993; Dahiya et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2025). When educational institutions place too much emphasis on control, with little room for expression, the risk of alienation and emotional exhaustion increases.

The findings show that Islamic boarding schools provide physical and social spaces that allow students to move, interact, and express themselves naturally. Statements from musyrif and students confirm that an overly strict approach actually disturbs the comfort and inner peace of students.

The contribution of this research is the placement of the Qur'anic concepts of *fiṭrah* and *aḥsan* as the basis for humanizing the pesantren environment. Beauty that is in harmony with *fiṭrah* helps prevent dehumanization in the boarding school education system and strengthens students' sense of existential comfort.

Spiritual and Illuminative Beauty

In the study of spiritual well-being, the dimensions of meaning and transcendence are seen as important factors in individual psychological resilience, especially in a fast-paced, often shallow digital world (Cleveland & Fisher, 2014; King & Boyatzis, 2015). Spirituality provides an existential anchor that helps individuals maintain their life orientation and self-control.

The findings show that the mosque, congregational worship, and the internalization of the value of tawhid are central to pesantren life. Santri associate spiritual tranquility with the ability to control themselves in the use of gadgets and other digital activities. Spiritual beauty is present through the solemnity of rituals, the cleanliness of worship spaces, and the consistent rhythm of worship.

The main contribution of this study is to show that the Qur'anic concept of *nūr* functions as an existential anchor in pesantren pedagogy. Spiritual beauty not only supports the religious dimension but also strengthens santri's resilience in facing digital pressures.

In summary, this discussion shows that the six "Beauty" clusters work in an integrated and cumulative way, forming a boarding school educational ecology that is calming, balancing, and humanizing. These findings are in line with the view that the influence of the environment on learning engagement is mediated by student welfare (Chen et al., 2017; Lombardi et al., 2019; Makaremi et al., 2024). By integrating Qur'anic interpretation, modern educational theory, and empirical findings from Islamic boarding schools—as also emphasized in contextual Islamic education affirms the position of Qur'anic Environmental Pedagogy "Beauty" as a valid, contextual, and relevant theoretical contribution to the development of Islamic education in the digital age.

Thus, this study offers three main innovations. First, this article develops the concept of "Beauty" as a Qur'anic environmental pedagogy model systematically formulated through thematic interpretation based on *Tafsīr Jalālayn*, thereby bridging classical interpretation with contemporary educational practices. Second, this study shows that the beauty of the pesantren environment functions as a pedagogical infrastructure that empirically contributes to the comfort of santri and learning resilience in the digital age—going beyond approaches that have focused on technology regulation or facility aspects alone. Third, through the synthesis of the six "Beauty" clusters, this article offers a replicable conceptual framework that can be applied to various pesantren contexts without requiring luxury, while expanding the international discourse on the relationship between aesthetics, well-being, and Islamic education.

Conclusion

This study suggests that "Beauty" may be understood as a multidimensional Qur'anic concept encompassing visual, moral, psychological, harmonious, humanistic, and spiritual dimensions. Through a thematic exegesis (*tafsīr mawḍū'ī*) based primarily on *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* and supported by comparative exegetical readings, the findings indicate that beauty in the Qur'an extends beyond aesthetic appreciation and may be interpreted as a framework for understanding educational environments and human flourishing. In this respect, the study offers a possible contribution to thematic Qur'anic studies by demonstrating how classical exegetical concepts can be contextualized within contemporary educational settings. The field findings further indicate that the six identified Beauty clusters are reflected, albeit in different ways, within the educational practices of the three pesantren examined. Participants frequently associated environmental order, ethical relationships, institutional balance, and spiritual routines with experiences of comfort, stability, and meaningful engagement in learning. Rather than functioning merely as decorative or symbolic elements, these dimensions appear to shape how students experience their educational environment amid the challenges of digital life.

At a theoretical level, this study proposes Qur'anic Environmental Pedagogy of Beauty as an interpretive framework that connects Qur'anic concepts, exegetical traditions, and contemporary educational practices. However, this framework should be understood as an exploratory and contextually grounded interpretation rather than a universally applicable model. Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study was conducted in only three pesantren and therefore reflects specific institutional contexts. Second, the analysis relied primarily on qualitative data and thematic interpretation, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Third, although *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* served as the principal exegetical reference, other interpretive traditions may yield alternative conceptualizations of beauty. Future studies may employ comparative exegetical approaches, quantitative designs, or mixed methods to further examine the relationship between environmental beauty, student well-being, and educational outcomes across a wider range of Islamic educational settings.

CRediT Authorship Contribution Statement
Taufikin: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal Analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Project administration, Resources, Software, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, and Writing – review & editing. **Ahmad Hariyadi:** Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, and Writing – review & editing.

Declaration of Competing Interest
The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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Declaration of Generative AI Use
The author declares that Trinka AI was used exclusively for language editing and proofreading, including the correction of typographical and grammatical errors and the refinement of overly wordy or complex sentences to enhance clarity, conciseness, and readability. The use of this tool was strictly limited to linguistic and editorial improvements without altering the original meaning or scientific substance of the manuscript. No AI tools were employed to generate scientific content, develop academic arguments, analyze data, interpret research findings, or formulate conclusions. All substantive content and intellectual contributions were independently developed by the author, who assumes full responsibility for the originality, accuracy, academic integrity, and final content of the manuscript.

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